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A. D. C. I.,

Mr. George A. Fitch, Secretary of the local Foreign Y.M.C.A, handed me the attached publication - "The Negro Worker", together with the attached letter, addressed to the Editor of the "Far Eastern Monthly", both of which have come from Moscow and which the local Post office authorities sent to him.

Mr. Fitch considers that the Post office authorities mistake the Pan Pacific Association, to which he is attached, for the Pan Pacific Labour Union, with which he has no connections.

February 24th 1929

John A. Cook

Add (2) how many copies has the Soviet Govt. published?

A/D.C.I.

I recommend that a copy of the Negro Worker be sent to the usual authorities.

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THE NEGRO WORKER

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J.W.FORD
in charge of editing.

Address all correspondence to Moscow 11, Solyanka 12.
Profintern.

PLAN OF WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE OF NEGRO WORKERS OF THE RILU.

1. The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers shall establish immediate contact with Negro and mixed trade unions, clubs and fraternal organisations of Negro workers and the Negro proletariat with the view of organising the unorganised workers and drawing these into the international revolutionary class struggle.

2. U.S.A. (a) In the United States, in the TUEL a special committee should be placed in charge of coordinating the work of organising Negro workers. (b) This Committee should as soon as possible call a Conference of Negro trade unions and mixed unions --- the Plumbers' Union of Chicago, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and other unions and Negro workers' organisations, as the Negro Workers" Relief Committee, the A.M.L.C. etc.

(c) The Conference should draw up a programme on the basis of the decisions of the 4th Congress of the R.I.L.U. for undertaking the work of organising the unorganised Negro workers, drawing these into the ranks of the white unions when possible, organising special trade unions of Negro workers and making plans for setting up TU centers in important industrial centers --- Chicago, Pittsburg, New York, Detroit, Buffalo and Baltimore.

(d) Work among the industrial and agricultural workers should also be started in the South, with Birmingham, Ala., as a center.

(e) A TU center should be set up on the Pacific (west) Coast for work among Japanese, Chinese and Negro workers and spread into the lumber fields of the North-West.

(f) A research section should be set up in New York.

(g) Trade Union schools should be set up in Chicago and New York.

3. Africa.-

(a) In South Africa it is necessary to take steps to form a TU center to link up the TU of South Africa.

(b) A conference should be called at which the tasks and programme of a TU Center should be worked out; contact should be made with West, East and Central Africa for the purpose of linking up the workers there with the South African center.

(c) Trade Union schools should be set up in South Africa. In the meantime special trade union courses are to be organised at the existing Party School.

4. West Indies.- In the West Indies organisational work should be carried on and contacts made with a view of establishing a TU center. Connections should be made with the revolutionary TU of South America for stimulating activity among Negro workers of South America.

5. The Committee should participate in the Latin-American Conference which takes place in May, and cooperate with the Latin American Secretariat.

6. A Bulletin, the "Negro Worker" should be issued monthly.

7. To publish a series of pamphlets dealing with questions concerning the Negro workers, their conditions of work, trade union organisations, etc.

8. An International Conference of Negro workers will be called in the latter part of 1929 in order to lay a basis for international connections of Negro workers throughout the world, and to bring them into close contact with the International TU Movement.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE
OF NEGRO WORKERS OF THE RILU.

LESSONS OF THE VESTRIS DISASTER AND A PROGRAMME OF ORGANISATION AND ACTION.

By Ford.

The class struggle ever rages in intensity under capitalism, even on the high seas. Much has been written about the British steamship "Vestris" of "Lamport and Holt Company", which sank in the Atlantic Ocean on November 12, 1928, with the loss of one hundred and eleven lives. The sinking of this old, rotten hulk has brought once again vividly to light the rotten conditions of a seaman's life under capitalist rule. More particularly did it bring to light the unbearable conditions of Negro seamen who are lashed down under a system of racial oppression, slander and lies. The question of "coloured" seamen in general (Chinese, "orientals", Indians, etc.) has also been raised in all its international implications.

Surrounding this tragedy and marshalled against the sea workers were all the groupings of reactionary forces of capitalism as well as capitalist reaction: the shipowners, governmental officials and agents, bourgeois and reformist newspapers and reporters, trade union bureaucrats and finally the greatest weapon by which the capitalist divide and rule --- intense racial antagonisms, browbeating, etc. etc.

The "Vestris" put out to sea from the port of New York November 10 for a South American port and sank two days later "in a sea that would not have endangered a well formed vessel" (the reluctant confession of the 2-nd officer in command). The vessel sank for no apparent reason, THAN THE GREED OF THE SHIPOWNERS, THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE SHIP OFFICIALS AND THE FACT THAT IT WAS A ROTTEN HULK OF 20 YEARS' SERVICE ON THE SEA. It was "inspected" and allowed to leave the port by U.S. governmental officials. The loss of life was 60 passengers, largely women and children, and 51 members of the crew, some of whom (Negro stokers) were tied in the below deck of the ship as she plunged to the bottom of the sea.

In connection with the sinking the following charges were made:

1) That the "Vestris" sailed without having been properly inspected, in an unseaworthy condition.

2) That some of the life boats were leaky.

3) That the captain committed a series of blunders amounting to criminal negligence.

4) That he sent an S.O.S. Sunday night and immediately cancelled it, they delayed 11 hours, until 10 a.m. Monday, before calling for help.

5) That the purpose of the delay was to save salvage fees.

6) That the list of the ship was very great 24 hours before the ship sank.

7) That the crew was indisciplined and incompetent.

8) That some of the crew (Negro firemen) became panic-stricken and rushed the boats crowding out passengers.

9) That the captain over the protest of passengers allowed a leaky boat to be launched, with a six inch hole in it, which capsized with 40 people.

10) That in contrast, good life boats were lowered with only a few Negro members of the crew as occupants who played the role of murderers by rowing away from other people.

11) That 4 Negroes in a boat who did rescue a white woman, refused to save her husband.

(New York Times, Nov. 15,1928)

The following facts have been established:

1) That the ship was known to be unseaworthy by the shipowners.

2) That it left the port of New York with a list.

3) That the list had developed to 30 or 40 degrees by Sunday night (30 degrees means serious danger).

4) That the captain failed to send distress signals at this time.

5) That the object was to save salvage fees.

6) That "unknown" messages were sent to the company regarding this.

7) That S.O.S. signals were not sent until Monday about 9 a.m.

(the ship sank 5 hours later).

8) That inefficiency, indifference, the brow-beating of Negro members of the crew and negligence reigned supreme among the officers.

9) That Negro members of the crew workedin water up to their chest firing the boilers.

10) That Negro membersof the crew saved many lives.

11) That one Negro member of the crew saved at least 20 lives by swimming to and fro in the ocean placing passengers in life boats.

These facts in their barest outline placé the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the shipowners, the ship officials and the governmental agents. But in order to uphold, protect and shield and to obscure the conditions of life of the sea workers, every agency of capitalist control shifted the blame on the shoulders of the workers of the crew, particularly the Negro seamen. Capitalist sheets carried streaming head lines:

"PANIC-STRICKEN, COWARDLY, UNRULY NEGRO CREW RESPONSIBLE FOR SINKING", "NEGRO FIREMEN REFUSED TO FIRE BOILERS".

The Irish Times of November 19 states:

"Engineers alleged that the Negro firemen became impossible to handle even when they were forced back to the boilers they refused to handle their jobs, that the engineers struggled to replace the Negro firemen and tackled a job manfullywhich requires long experience and the brute force of a gorilla". The New York Times carried report after report of the alleged cowardice of Negro firemen. The reformist German "Vorwarts", this lickspittling capitalist agent, was doing the same, as well as many others, reformist and bourgeois sheets.

Investigation Brings out Prejudices of Attorney.

But not alone against the Negro members of the crew were slanderous reports made but against the whole working crew, reports of the inefficiency of the crew generally (to shield bad equipment) of the crew stealing equipment from the life boats of passengers to secure their own life -(to shield lack of equipment). Behind such smoke screens the rotten capitalist system hides and attempts to place responsibility on the shoulders of workers. Finally, the irony of the situation is expressed in the following SCREAMING NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "CALL VESTRIS CREW TO TELL WHY THEY LIVE".-- why they did not die!

In the so-called "investigation" by the U.S. district court the class prejudices of the persecuting attorney is indicated by his sympathetic attitude towards the officials and passengers, in an effort to white-wash the shipowners,-- contrasted with his vicious, belligerent attitude to the workers of the crew, especially when their testimony was not good for the shipowners. This is an attitude with which American workers are quite familiar in their clashes with the persecuting attorneys of the capitalist courts.

Bureaucrats of Trade Unions Attack Chinese Seamen.

The most sulking, deceitful and dispisable agents of the capitalist system are the bureaucratic officials of the reactionary trade unions. A resolution was introduced into the Central Trades and Labour Council of New York by P.J. Walters of the Postal Employees Union proposing to have as its object to find out whether the crew was "non-union, indisciplined and underpaid". The resolution however contained a significant clause "asking investigation into the alleged employment of Orientals who cannot understand English, in violation of the American Seamen's Law by American Vessels, especially in the Pacific trade". This clause is the essence of the resolution and is significant because there were no oriental seamen on the Vestris and the fact that Chinese and oriental seamen are employed by American vessels in the Pacific and are unorganised. Instead of setting as their task the organisation of all seamen the bureaucrats take this opportunity to attack so-called "coloured", coolie labour which the capitalist class does not intend to do without.

"The Industrial Solidarity" the official organ of the I.W.W. also gets off the track. In its Nov. 21 issue it points out correctly that one of the causes for the disaster was "the way in which the unorganised longshoremen are FORCED TO WORK AT HIGH SPEED, thus being unable to place

cargo in a manner that will withstand the action of heavy seas and prevent listing".

Then it commences to talk about the lives of all on board would have been saved if there had been "well-trained and competent crews",on board. Further, in drawing attention to the Leviathan disaster, it says that the crew was "picked from the scum of the Bowery". We dont understand the position of "Solidarity" here. In the first place we know where the responsibility lay --- the responsibility of the Vestris disaster is upon the shoulders of the Lamport Holt Company and the rotten capitalist system, we dont excuse Lamport Holt and the capitalist system by in any way placing the blame on the workers directly or undirectly, by talking about incompetent, inexperienced workers, etc. etc.

We say that workers must be organised "the scum of the Bowery", "the inexperienced" as well as the experienced, all workers including the Negroes who are till now the last to be thought of.

Another trade union paper, "the Illinois Miner" of Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A. has the following to say: "Experienced seamen, while giving credit to the Negroes, doubt whether they had had the requisite experience in handling boats in an emergency". While many such disasters have happened in the last few years being directly the fault of the shipowners, we dont suppose Negro workers or any others are going around looking for such experiences just to qualify to handle faulty boats in such "emergencies". They say further that "the policy of the Lamport & Holt and Company and other British and American lines is to replace competent white sailors with Negroes, Chinese, Filipinos and Lascars. They work for less and dont know their rights so well as the white sailors". This is the crux of the matter. We would like to inquire of "the Illinois Miner" or any other group of "trade unionists" if they are just beginning to wake up to the situation! And if so when are they going to stop belly-aching about Negroes, Chinese, Filipinos, etc., "taking their jobs", not knowing their rights", etc., and get down to the business of bringing about the solidarity of all the workers against the common enemy. However, in such emergencies it is up to the Negro, Chinese, Filipino and all so-called "coloured" seamen to organise unions to fight their battles.

Seamen of the Vestris Unorganised.

The following facts stand out in regards to the conditions of the seamen of the Vestris:

1. Black and white were unorganised.
2. Seamen on Lamport and Holt ships are not allowed to organise.
3. White seamen receive $45.00 per month about $ 10 below a decent living standard).
4. Negro seamen receive $ 30.00 per month.
5. The food was rotten.
6. Negro seamen were segregated in mess halls and sleeping quarters (their food was much worse).

Sinking of the Fascist Ship "Mafalda" a Year Ago.

The sinking of the "Vestris" calls to mind the disaster to a fascist ship "Principessa Mafalda" a year ago and coincides almost in every detail with the Vestris disaster. On October 25, 1927 the "Principessa Mafalda", an Italian fascist ship sank in the Atlantic with the loss of a hundred lives in perfectly clear weather and windless sea, for no apparent reason than it was a rotten hulk. It happened so that on one of the steamers which came to the rescue some of the crew were chinese. This fact was utilized in order to divert the attention of the public opinion away from the real criminals.

Reformist Slanderers. The shipowners" press of the world began immediately to white wash its Italian fellow-capitalists of the "Navigazione Generale Italiana". The "Schiffahrt" a reformist organ of the reformist organ of a reformist German seamen's organization which is under "socialist and international" leadership in its issue of January 28, 1928,carried the following:

"We have always maintained this and this is not the first case

which proves that under similar circumstances the "coloured" seamen have proved their utter unsuitability. We would not like to have the repetition of such a case in the German shipping industry. Equal rights suppose equal duties but the fulfillment of the latter insofar as it concerns the rescuing of a ship of passengers (in consequence of the danger involved) is beyond the ability of coloured seamen."

This is the sort of international solidarity handed out by reformist leaders after shouting high sounding phrases. Without making any attempt to place the responsibility, properly where it belongs, they begin to white wash the capitalists and demand the exclusion of coloured and Chinese seamen instead of organizing them, to raise their standards and better their conditions.

In the meantime we find Benito Mussolini, himself, in a recent article making a bitter attack on the Negroes of the U.S.A. and upon the people of China. So we find reformism and fasism going hand in hand.

Soviet Krassin Crew Dispell Slanders.

Class issues are obscured by slander and lies. From the first after the establishment of the first workers' government in Russia the world capitalists and bourgeoisie in its deadly hatred of the Soviet workers" Republic and in order to obscure from the workers of the world the ideal of the first workers' Republic has continuously and consistently spread slander and lies against the Soviet Union. Recently some of this slander was overcome through the action of the crew of the Soviet ship Krassin which in the face of insurmountable difficulties and with proletarian precision went into the far North to the rescue of the fascist Nobile and his crew which had met disaster in an attempted aeroplane fight to the North Pole. The world had to proclaim the Soviet crew of the Krassin as heroes of its class, and a workers government.

International Solidarity of Workers.

The sinking of the Vestris following close upon the sinking of the "Mafalda" has attracted world wide attention. Especially has it brought out the conditions surrounding the life of seamen. Seamen of all the world must look upon this disaster from the viewpoint of the workers, the eternal class conflicts which will exist until capitalism is abolished, the need for international unity and solidarity to accomplish this. This unity is on all sides attacked by the enemies of the workers; the capitalists marshall their agents and agencies, the press, governmental, reformist and racial antagonism against the workers to prevent their unity. Racial issues and antagonisms not only prevent the unity of the workers but obscure the class interests involved and also shift and place responsibility and blame for disasters on the workers themselves. The only means to overcome this is through international unity and solidarity. From the above, analysis we can draw the following conclusion:

1. White seamen cannot free themselves by calling for the expulsion of "coloured" seamen from ships, it can only be done through international unity. The capitalist class does not intend to loose its profits, and it means to keep up the competition between lowly paid coloured workers and the white workers, just as English miners today are competing with Chinese miners who work the British mines in China.

2. Coloured workers cannot free themselves from racial abuses at the hands of capitalists without organization; neither will they be respected anywhere without organisation. You must be heroes not for your capitalist class enemies, but for your own class.

3. Only through the international solidarity of seamen of all races can the abuses of the capitalists be abolished.

A Programme for Organisation.

The Progressive Seamen's Union and the American Negro Labour Congress of New York rallied to the defense of the seamen of the Vestris.

The International Trade Union Committee of Negro workers of the RILU issued a world protest against capitalist abuses and proferred assistance to seamen towards organizing seamen's unions. The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers of the RILU proposes further the following organizational programme:

1. The organization of International Relief for relatives of the victims of the crew and the surviving members of the crew through the Negro Workers' Relief Committee of New York.

2. The organization of an international seamen's Conference, looking forward especially to the organization of "coloured" seamen.

(a) we suggest that seamen in every port set up local committees and communicate immediately with us.

(b) We urge all organizations and individuals who are interested in such proposals to also get in touch with us and send proposals.

(c) We urge all international seamen's clubs and port bureaux to assist by passing this information along to all ports.

(d) organise ship committees', line committees, port committees, etc. etc.

The following slogans and demands should form the basis of action of these committees:

(1) Abolition of laws and repressive legislation against seamen.
(2) A radical change in the organization of the existing unions, especially as to the unorganised and lowly paid seamen and colour-bars.
(3) Protection of the young seamen.
(4) Against war preparation and danger.
(5) For a 7 hour day for top men.
(6) For shorter hours for lower deck men.
(7) For annual leaves with pay.
(8) For better cultural conditions, reading rooms, recreation rooms, etc. on ship as well as at ports.
(9) Medical attention.
(10) Sick protection.
(11) For a minimum staff or ship crew which will not place too great strain on crews in case of emergency.
(12) Definite age limit for seagoing ships.
(13) Maximum limit of ship cargo.
(14) Against colour bars, etc.
(15) Minimum wage.
(16) Against money lenders on ships who rob the seamen.
(17) Shore leave and freedom when ships put in at ports.
(18) A 6-hour day for all young seamen (18 years).
(19) Special courses and training for young seamen.
(20) Equal pay for equal work to all, regardless of race or colour of the workers.
(21) Equal opportunity for promotion for Negro and coloured seamen.
(22) Shore leave and freedom for Negro seamen (Australia, etc., Negro seamen are not allowed ashore).
(23) Against segregation and discrimination in mess halls and sleeping quarters.
(24) Against the tendency of confining certain work to Negro workers.

THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

By Dan Richards.

Early in October a political crisis developed in South Africa by the action of Madeley, Minister of Post and Telegraph in the "Pact" Government and belonging to the National Council group of the South African Labour Party, in receiving a deputation from the South African Trade Union Congress, which included native representatives. 1/

This action constituted a violation of the Government policy in relation

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1/ We must not be under any illusions as to the role of Madeley. He has no intentions of fighting on behalf of the natives, this was simply a manoeuvre on his part in the internal personal struggle in the government. --- Ed. note.

to the Industrial Commercial Workers' Union which has consistently been refused recognition by the Hertzog Pact Administration. In order to rid himself of Madeley and thereby reassert the Government's hostility to the natives organised in the ICWU, Herzog, the Prime Minister, resigned so as to reconstruct the Cabinet with the exclusion of Madeley, who was replaced by H.W. Sampson, a strong supporter of the Col. Cresswell group of the South African Labour Party.

This incident appears to afford the opportunity for dissolving the Pact between the Nationalists and the National Council of the Labour Party (which is the Left element in the SALP). Thus the ministerial organ "De Berger" hastens to dismiss the suggestion that it is now possible for the Nationalist Party to cooperate with the National Council element in the Pact. The journal points out that the

> "Sooner clarity and finality is reached in the matter the better for the Nationalists and the country. The Government is firmly convinced that in treating the ICWU as a political organisation harboring submersive designs, they are supported by the overwhelming mass of public opinion. There is no doubt that the growth of this movement in the Transvaal, in Natal, and in some parts of the Cape Province, has caused a great deal of anxiety among Europeans".
>
> (Quoted in the "Daily Telegraph" 6.11.28).

It is clear that Madeley's move in receiving this deputation on the issue of collective bargaining has placed the Cresswellite group of the Labour Party in a dilema as if they do not fall in with Madeley on this matter they will be accused of disloyalty, and if they do they must follow up the Madeley decision in the face of Government opposition. The circumstances have led to a further rift between the two camps of the SALP, as it is now known that General Herzog, in appointing Samson of the Cresswellite group to replace Madeley as Minister of Post and Telegraph made a direct concession to Col. Cresswell.

The results of an election in the Turffontein division to fill a vacancy in the Transvaal Provincial Council demonstrates the acuteness of the Labour division. The split in the Labour vote in this area has allowed the candidate of the South African Party (Gen. Smuts) to get in, which he certainly would not have done in the absence of a split labour vote. That the rift will now continue in a more aggravated form as a result of Madeley's dismissal is hinted at in a comment made in the "Times" 9.11.28:

> "The same result is probable in a dozen or so seats at the General Election if the Labour civil war continues, and Mr. Madeley's exile from the Cabinet and Mr. Sampson's accession to it, make a Labour truce unthinkable unless a miracle happens".

Another example of the increasing tension between the two Labour factions is seen in the resignation of John Christie, Labour member, for Langlaagate, who asserts that his resignation is due to the

> "Nationalist Party having indicated that they favour the Cresswell section of the Labour Party. It therefore appears to me that the pact no longer exists and the conditions under which I was elected to Parliament no longer prevail".
>
> ("Daily Telegraph", 9;11.28.)

In view of the increasing activities of the native workers in recent months the Nationalist Party have sought an opportunity to make the native question an election issue, and are therefore greeting the Madeley action joyfully as it affords them an election cry they have been looking for. It is clear too that General Herzog and Mr. Roos, Minister of Justice, have been making up their minds to fight the election issue on an appeal to white prejudice, against the natives, especially the black vote in the Cape. Expressing the Nationalist view at Johannesburg, Mr. Roos declared most emphatically that the Nationalist party could not possible have any political truck with sympathisers of the ICWU in South Africa.

> "Any reference to the ICWU movement is going to block the ranks of the Nationalist Party more firmly and strongly than ever".
>
> "Manchester Guardian", 5.II.28.

This situation is likely to dominate the General Election which now is predicted to take place many months earlier than the arranged time in the early summer of next year. Therefore what line the Labour Party are going to take in relation to the Pact Government which will only continue to exist on the basis of open opposition to the native movement will be determined very largely by the outcome of this immediate political crisis. In the past numerous conferences have been held by elements comprising the Nationalist Party and the Crosswell group of the SAEP on the allocation of Pact Parliamentary seats and no conflict is anticipated until meetings have been held with the National Council faction of the Labour Party.

(These conferences have shown that strong elements in the Nationalist Party will not sanction too much sympathy to even the Cresswellite group).

The line of the Labour Party in the past can also be illustrated by speeches made by members of both factions of the Labour Party which show very clearly that there was unity so far as the existence of the Herzog administration was concerned. W.A.Sampson, speaking at a Labour meeting at Kenilworth Hall discussing the political destiny of South Africa said in so many words.

"He hoped that the Union's political destiny will remain in the hands of the white people. He had no bias against the native. He would like to see the native progress, but he knew the native centered behind the white men".

(South African Star, 21.9.28).

At the same meeting A.C.Ford, another Cresswellite claimed that the Pact Government had done more for industry than any previous government and he did not know any Nationalists who found themselves in disagreement with the leaders of the Labour Party, Col. Cresswell. Similarly, at meetings of the National Council faction of the SALP, Kentridge and Allen, had outlined at various times the supposed benefits had resulted from the Pact regime. Kentridge urged the continuation of the Pact in order to prevent the return at the General Elections of the Smuts Party.

"It was necessary that the Pact should continue for certain of the Nationalist seats were dependent upon Labour support and vice versa. Unless it is possible for the Nationalists and the Labour Party to co-operate in the next election, there is every likelihood that General Smuts would be returned".

(Speech by Kentridge at Brakpan, "South African Star". 21.9.28).

Now, however, the dismissal of Madeley and the concession to the Cresswellite group has brought the nationalist Council faction out against the continuation in the future of the pact so far as the NC are concerned. So the position today is that the Hertzog and the Cresswellite groups are united for the general elections and the National Council group will come out and fight independently. Clearly this coalition between the Nationalists and Cresswellites is aimed at frustrating the return of the Smutts Party at the General Election, and at destroying the attempts of any element in the National Council faction who seek to modify the Pact policy and the Government attitude on the native question. This seems to be confirmed by the latest Dutch press reports and is also seen in a statement made by Kentridge of the NC. "The exclusion of Mr. Madeley from the Cabinet had closed the door against renewed peace efforts; the appointment of a Cresswellite to fill the vacant post barried it. Mr. Malan's provocative speech at Hondrino declaring that the Nationalists had thrown in their lot with the Cresswellites had bolted it".

(Daily Telegraph, 15.11.28.)

<u>The Industrial Commercial Workers Union and the South African Communist Party.</u>

The relations of the South African Communist Party to the ICU is characterised by a policy of opposition to and exposure of the Kadalie reformist leadership.

The leadership of the ICWU, which is affiliated to the Amsterdam International, have conducted a persistent campaign against the attempts of the Party to give the union a militant outlook and they have employed the policy of exclusion of Communists where that could be effected.

How moderate and reactionary is the existing leadership of the ICWU is revealed in the speech made by Keable Mote at Wolmerstand.

> "The ICU would advise the natives when to discard their passes, but they should not do so at the present, as he was of opinion that the Government would eventually be sympathetic in the matter."
> ("Star", 25.9.29)

Speaking of his attitude to the Pass Laws in the past Clemens Kadalie, general secretary of the ICU: "That he regretted the hard things he had said in the past regarding the pass laws, and today many realised that wild talk would not assist them". This was said at the conference convened to discuss action for the appelation of the Pass Laws and was the most widely represented gathering held in South Africa at which there had been discriminatory exclusion of the Communist Party.

The Party relations to the ICU can again be illustrated from the editorial comment appearing in the South African Worker, 19.9.28. On the broader issue of trade unionism in general the SACP forces the joint organisation right throughout for natives and whites. This organisation is making good progress among the native workers. Formed only at the beginning of the year it has been successful in a strike embracing both white and native workers for the very first time in the history of South Africa. It has also been successful in a number of other strikes.

The leadership of the ICU are sharply against this non-European organisation and will only consider unity on the basis of affiliation to the Amsterdam International. Numerous trade unions are now proposing the calling of conferences to discuss specifically the question of catering for the natives, being actuated in this respect by the growth and success of the S.African Federation of Native Trade Unions. The latest Party press report shows that the ICU is in a state of disruption. The Cape Town, Belleville and Lyndenburg branches have broken away from the ICU. The reformists' policy of the ICU and maladministration are the reasons for this situation, so says the Party paper. However the Party opposes secession and break-aways and calls for a revolutionary leadership: "The disrupters have got to be frustrated and the organisation kept intact at all costs and allowed to adjust itself constructionally on proper trade union lines, with autonomy for its constituent sections. UNDER REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP, and the day is ours".
("South African Worker", 24.10.28

IMPERIALISM, WAR AND THE NEGRO TOILERS

By William Wilson

On the morning of one day the press of the imperialist world heralded the signing of the Kellogg Peace Pact. The League of Nations, that medium for the establishment of World Peace, had not been particularly successful in its mission. Now a "reciprocal agreement on the outlawing of war as a weapon of national policy" was advanced by the United States of America, the one great imperialist and war mongering power that remained without the League --- because of British domination within --- and yet the power, whose dominant political and economic position forces it into a struggle for world hegemony. America's dominance economic-

ally forced the acceptance of this treaty. However, before the signing, in an effort to thwart, as far as possible, American imperialism, the European imperialists' signatories to the Pact, submitted reservations of an emasculating nature, but hypocritically appearing as being desirous of affecting permanent peace, they signed.

Almost literally on the morning of the next day, the press of the imperialist world was broadcasting an expose of the terms of the new Anglo-French naval agreement. The American press, in order to influence sentiment favourable to imperialistic purposes, at once proclaimed it a direct blow at America's prestige. England and France were busy explaining how the agreement would aid in the suppression of war by opening the doors to further disarmament negotiations between Britain, France and America. America protested the possibility of such negotiations growing out of a programme which obviously aimed at the maintenance of the naval supremacy of Great Britain and of the military power of France. The Liberal press of the world was tearfully declaring the Agreement a menace to peace and deploring its appearance on the heels of so magnificent a gesture at international "unity" as was the Kellogg Pact.

These manoeuvres with their varied and colorful interpretations by Liberals, Socialist reformers and bourgeoisie, may be extremely confusing to the man on the street, but they are extremely important to him. Of all men, there are none to whom these matters are more important than to the black man.

America's struggle for world hegemony grows out of her dominant political and economic position plus her lack of control over those sources of raw materials which are vitally necessary to her forces of production and as well the lack of sufficient foreign markets to absorb the overproduction of her monopolistic industries. To her a redivision of the "spheres of interest" of the mandated territories, of the "backward colonies" is fast becoming imperative. These cannot be peacefully acquired. They are equally necessary to the maintenance of the dominant world position of those nations who now possess them. Attempts at "peaceful penetration" only result in the creation of new imperialist ententes, new groupings of small states under the direction of their imperialist overlords, new and greater contradictions among the imperialists themselves, new wars.

The aftermath of the world war is ruthless struggle between the imperialists on the international economic field, the aftermath of this economic struggle must of necessity be another armed conflict in which the world will again be bathed in blood.

And the Negro? A redivision by the imperialists powers of the sources of raw materials and of markets such as we have spoken of means primarily a redivision of Africa. Already a new and rapidly growing German Imperialism is soliciting in the League of Nations the return of its former African "spheres of interest". America with giant strides is moving onward to the economic conquest of a dark continent. Already Liberia is in truth an American colony. Her investments there last year were greater than the combined investments of the other imperialist nations. The consequent industrial development of Africa means the expropriation of what little land remains in tha hands of the native, it means his ruthless exploitation and oppression, it means the passage of legislation equally as vicious as the Pass Laws, hut tax, poll tax and Corvee. It means increased poverty and degradation for the Negroes whose lot cannot conceivably be worse.

It means a repitition in other African "spheres of interest" of the bloody regime of King Leopold in the Belgian Congo, it means new atrocities that will remain hidden from the knowledge of the "civilised world" by the exercise of a rigid censorship over the press on the part of the imperialist butchers. It means years of dehumanising, devitalising unrequited toil on the part of the African natives that European and

American parasites may lounge in ease and leisure in famous watering places.

But the position of the African is no worse than that of his blood brother overseas. The Negro Republics and Islands of the West Indies are in the clutches of American Imperialism. Central America with its millions of Negroes has fallen before the crunching fist of Wall Street. It too has been introduced to a vicious color-caste system. South America is the locus of a gigantic economic struggle in which the forces of "dollar diplomacy" and British Imperialism are the contestants and millions of Negro peasants and workers among the victims. In the United States the Negro owes his desperate plight to capitalisms demand for more surplus profits and still more surplus profits and to Imperialism.

The hand maidens of Imperialism are exploitation, oppression and surplus profits. The source of the latter is cheap docile labor, the labor of the colonial peoples. The results of all are poverty, degradation and dehumanisation.

The last war saw a half a million black troops drawn from France's black colonies on the battlefields of Europe. A quarter of a million American Negroes fought side by side with these and two million more were drawn into the munition factories of the Imperialists and into the production of needed raw materials to the end that a world challenging German Imperialism might be crushed by its competitors and that England and France might share the glory of carrying the "white man's burden". To the black man and other colonials the end meant not freedom, only a change of masters.

The economic manoeuvres of the imperialists have all the potentialities for war. The Kellogg Peace Pact is in truth and almost undisguised pact of war. The Anglo-French Naval Agreement offers proof of the creation of a new Entente in preparation for the next war. Soon again we will hear the mad screeches of "war to end war", "down with the new Huns", another power will be called a menace to "civilisation", new allusions will delude black masses into the defence of a system which inevitably leads to wars and their own further exploitation and oppression. Soon again the drums will beat. Negroes in infinitely greater number will be forced into a struggle which can result only in their continued enslavement, in the continued enslavement of the millions of hapless Chinese, in the "salvation of India" for the Empire. But this time the answer of the Negro masses must be, we fight only "to break chains" and "to end imperialist wars".

THE NEGRO AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN US ELECTIONS

By Wilenkin

The Negro as a rule is barred from the polls in the South. In the North the Negro is in some States even a political factor, being frequently elected to office in some regions. Thus his effective voting power is concentrated in Northern States. His focus of influence lies in those middle Western States where the balance is closest between Republicans and Democrats.

The time is passed when the Negro has been considered and rightly, a static fixture in Republican machinery. And this change is due to many reasons.

The Negro has chiefly functioned in the South as farm laborer and farmer and in the North he was engaged in domestic and personal service. Hence his occupation deprived him of the opportunity to become

influential in politics.

The world war stimulated the demand for goods, and therefore for labor, and at the same time decreased the available labor supply. Immigration from the belligerent nations immediately ceased, and there was a marked decrease in immigration from other countries; on the contrary, foreigners in large numbers departed to join the fighting forces of their native lands.

The labor shortage became acute soon after the United States entered the war in 1917, and enlistments withdrew hundreds of thousands of men from Northern industries. An unprecedented demand for Negro workers was the result. The migration from the South was mainly a response to the call of larger opportunity and higher wages in the North.

This state of affairs concentrated whole groups of Negroes in certain industrial localities and regions making them a political factor which had to be discounted during election time.

But the Negro as a race will never become a mighty power on the political horizon for in the first place it is scattered all over the country and the majority is still living below the Mason-Dixon line; in the second place, in the South the Negro is disfranchised. Only as a wage-earner may the Negro become a political factor and again in conjunction with the white proletarian masses, i.e., if the colored wage workers will organise in conjunction with the white wage earners on class lines will they succeed in becoming a political factor.

To be sure this undeniable fact affects the Negroes not only of the North but also of the South. For the solid South, which was crystallising before the Civil War and has been hardly dented since 1876 is at last broken up at the last election. Everybody is aware that the growth of manufactures in the South, based on the raw material produced there, has brought about a change of attitude on the question of protective tariff duties and there is a permeation of the Southern States by Northern capital.

And this industrial development of the Dixieland had an enormous effect on this region of the country. It has been forced to part with its old traditions of voting for the Democratic Party and has given a majority to Republican candidate in the States of Virginia, North Carolian, Florida and Texas, which for the first time since the Civil War of 1861-65, after their franchise was restored, gave their electoral vote to a Republican.

This change will still more accelerate the industrial development of the South and attract ever more Northern Capital to the Southern States.

No doubt the industrial development of the South will have its influence upon the agricultural pursuit: part of the agricultural workers will look for jobs in factories. Among them will be many colored people.

Negro workers of the South will be concentrated in industrial centers of the South, as it has occurred with Negro wage-earners which have migrated to the North.

And this state of affairs will make the Negro workers of the South a political factor if they will work in conjunction with the white workers and if they will organise their forces on the political and economic field.

The only Party which the American Negro wage workers should join is the Workers (Communist) Party, a section of the Communist International, for the Socialist Party as part of the Second International is an organisation of white races alone. Besides this in the past when the Socialist Party of America had many locals in the Dixieland it usually discriminated the Negro race by having special locals for colored members of its party.

The Russian Revolution has proven that the Communist Party

is the only one which recognises self-determination of nationalities. Hence, if the Negro wage-earners wish to accomplish their independence they will reach this goal only through the channels of the Communist movement. Therefore the Negro workers of America should rally to the Workers (Communist) Party of America.

FORCED LABOR AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR OFFICE

By G.Slavin

On December 4th the Second Session was opened of the "Commission of Experts on Native Labor" of the I.L.O. This Commission, formed as far back as 1926, was to prepare materials for the drafting of a convention on forced Labor, which is to be discussed at the XII International Labor Conference in Geneva, in May 1929.

Having commenced to discuss the question of forced Labor the ILO was in no great hurry to settle it. The first session of the "Commission on Native Labor" was convened on July 7 to 12, 1927. The resolutions passed at this session speak only of it being necessary to pay serious attention to the question of compulsory labor, of it being necessary to put limitations to it, in order to avoid misusage as far as possible, of it being necessary tofollow the line of gradually abolishing forced labor in general. The Commission proposed to the Director of the ILO to bring up the question of forced labor at one of the next conferences of the ILO, in order that a definite international convention be drawn up. The Commission has now been convened a second time for the final drafting of this convention and next year the first discussion of the convention will take place. It must be borne in mind that the international conference may disagree with the draft convention, and having taken it off the order of the day, send it to a new commision; that if the convention will be endorsed by the conference it must be once more discussed at one of the next conferences before it is finally endorsed; and finally, that even the endorsed convention may not be ratified, and thus not even become legally obligatory for those colonial powers which do not for some reason or other like the idea of it. Thus it is clear that all the discussions of the question of compulsory labor have as their aim not so much the settlement of the question itself, as the dissemination of illusions amongst the native workers, in order to counter "the influence of semi-educated agitators and the dissatisfaction with the authorities", which was spoken of with alarm in the report of the "Commission on Native Affairs" of the South African Union as far back as 1921.

It is quite clear that when matters concern the strengthening of the positions of capitalism in one or another place, neither the Amsterdam nor the Second International remain inactive. They also receive their roles in this work of hiding the true state of affairs, in disseminating illusions and in striving to distract the attention of the natives from the real methods of struggle against forced labor and other forms of slavery.

The Amsterdam International is striving to create a favourable attitude amongst the workers in the colonial countries towards the future discussion of the question of forced labor by the ILO. For this purpose the Secretariat of the Amsterdam International recommends all its sections to include in their delegations to the XII Labor Conference representatives of the colonies and Protectorates. Jouhaux, Secretary of the General Confederation of Labor of France, and one of the most prominent leaders of the Amsterdam International, already at the last session

of the National Council of the French GCL declared that a colored worker would be included in the composition of the French Delegation. Simultaneously the Amsterdamites are attempting to create the impression that the workers' representatives in the Labor Office will have to fight against the employers' representatives on the question of forced labor.

Undoubtedly the Amsterdamites and the Socialists will attempt through their agents such as Kedalie and other misleaders of the native workers, to strengthen the conviction that the defence of the toiling natives is in trustworthy hands. But it is sufficient to become acquainted with the views of the reformists themselves with regard to forced labor, in order to be convinced that they completely reflect the point of view of the exploiters.

"Le Peuple", official organ of the French GCL, and edited by Jouhaux himself, in its issue of October 12,1927, writes:

> "To be just it must be recognised that forced native labor has some justification. In those countries with a backward population one can hardly count on the voluntary labor of natives in order to lay roads, for the extension of enterprises in the interests of penetrating into the country and its development. Earnings is no stimulus for these lazy peoples with extremely moderate needs. The future advantages of this work, described by us, is a still smaller incitement.
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> "From the philisophical point of view the inadmissibility of forced labor may be recognised. In reality, however, --- and this is the whole crux of the colonial question --- in some instances the necessity for forced labor is indisputable. From the purely philosophical point of view the colonial system as a whole is to be condemned. It is clear, however, that the tendency towards new possessions and new riches will not hesitate before these arguments. In the same way it is impossible to expect that the industrialists will stop utilising the distant countries."

What about the resolution of the Second International on the colonial question, adopted at the Brussels Congress last August? Is it not a betrayal of the colonial peoples? In the resolution it is said that all forms of forced labor must be abolished, and in their place the natives must conclude with the employers labor contracts, the definite conditions of which must be regulated by the Government. These contracts must be concluded in the presence of judges or officials who are obliged to see that they are in full conformity with the existing laws. Thus the Second International considers that the question can be settled if the natives are given over to the paternal guidance of the officials, hoping evidently that the latter will follow the good wishes of the Socialists and become "independent of the Europeans living in the country" (resolution of the Second International).

One need only call to mind how the "independent" officials defend the rights of the "civilised" white workers in the cultural democratic countries of Europe, America and Australia, in order to see how "impartially" they will settle the affairs of the toilers of the "lower backward" races.

The demands of the Second International are in full conformity with the desires of the financial bourgeoisie, who need to increase the flow of labor power to the capitalist enterprises in order to have the possibility of countering the labor of "white paupers", in other words, by use of the labor of the "black and yellow" workers, to lower wages, and consequently, the living standards of the white workers.

Only by organising powerful class trade unions, which would cater for all workers, irrespective of race or color; only by uniting in the ranks of the Red International with the world revolutionary trade

urban movement, will the toilers of the Colonies free themselves from the yoke of the exploiters and build up the Commonwealth of Labor, where the White, Black, and Yellow laborers will work shoulder to shoulder for the common weal.

AMERICAN JUSTICE AND THE NEGRO TOILERS

By Padmore (USA)

Despite all the talk in America about democracy, liberty and equality, the capitalist class of this country is one of the most oppressive and reactionary forces in the world today.

The Negro has been the acid test of these empty phrases of the American bourgeoisie. These 12 millions of colored people represent the most exploited and oppressed section of the working class of the United States. They are the victims of the worst forms of brutality and terrorism imaginable. They are the subjects of lynching and peonage in its most horrible aspects. They are the helpless pawns of the most powerful and ruthless master class the world has ever seen. Such is the position of America's black citizenry.

The Frame-Up System

One of the most recent incidents which demonstrates in a concrete way the lot of the Negro masses is the case of a colored man named Benjamin Bess, who, after serving thirteen years of imprisonment on a frame-up charge, was temporarily released, but has been thrown back into jail to serve seventeen more years.

Bess is a native of the State of South Carolina. He was a farmer and lived for years in the community. Among his neighbours was a white family.

One day while the Negro was engaged in tilling his land, the woman of the white family walked across the field and raised the alarm that Bess had criminally assulted her. Her husband immediately had a warrant sworn out and the Negro was placed under arrest and imprisoned.

The news of the alleged assault was quickly circulated throughout the district and feeling against Bess developed like wildfire. Large mobs of angry white hooligans gathered before the prison gates and threatened to break through the guards so as to get the Negro that they might avenge their bestial instincts by lynching him on his own land in the presence of his accuser.

The police authorities, however, averted the efforts of the lynchocrats by reinforcing the prison and using their arms to keep the blood-thirsty mob at bay.

A trial, one of the farcical spectacles to which the American workers are daily subjected was hurriedly arranged; and Bess was brought before a jury of white men (Negroes not being permitted to sit on Southern juries.)

At the first hearing the "noble" Nordics are unable to agree on an acquittal despite the overwhelming evidence to prove that Bess was engaged at work at the time the crime was alleged to have taken place.

The mob continued to clamor for "Nigger-blood", so a second trial had to be staged. Bess was therefore brought before another jury of whites who, realising the blood-thirsty sentiment of the community, quickly brought in a verdict of guilty. In the normal procedure where a man is found guilty of rape the sentence is death in the State of South Carolina, but the jury, realising that the evidence upon which the man

was convicted was the testimony of the woman who was unable to corroborate here statements, they recommended mercy for Bess, and the judge sentenced him to thirty years at hard labor.

Prison Years

The Negro began to serve his sentence, giving every assurance that he was an innocent victim of race prejudice and the most vicious form of Negrophobia by his accuser. His plea, however, found a deaf ear. Governor after governor of the State was approached during the thirteen years of Bess' confinement, but no attempt was ever made to investigate the man's innocence.

As time went on, Bess resigned himself to prison life and gave up all hope of ever seeing the world again. His health soon declined. He contracted tuberculosis in the damp dungeon in which he spent thirteen years. His relatives were reduced to want in their heroic effort to plead his case before the bar of "public opinion", and they too little hoped to see the martyred Benjamin Bess a free man. Years rolled by and the world forgot this black victim of American "democracy", until a few weeks ago when the whole country was stirred by the full details of one of the most shocking cases of injustice in the annals of a so-called civilised nation.

A Woman's Confession

One day the woman became broken in health. As she lay daily awaiting death, her conscience seemed to have gotten the better of her, and she expressed a wish to her friends to "right as well as she could the great wrongs that she had committed on the Negro thirteen years ago." She therefore instructed one of here friends to prepare an affidavit to the effect that Ben Bess was innocent of the crime for which he had been imprisoned. That she lied against him thirteen years ago.

The news of the woman's confession was sent to the Governor of the State who ordered an investigation and being satisfied as to the truth of the affidavit issued a full pardon for Bess.

As the story of this revolting outrage reached the outside world, demands were made that everything possible should be done to right the wrong against the Negro although such injustice could never be entirely righted.

Bess was taken out of his dungeon, destitute, familyless, and without the means of livelihood. The Negroes of the State clamored for and demanded justice. Delegations went to the Governor to procure restitution from the State that had been instrumental in sending the man to jail for the best years of his life on the lying testimony of a woman whose evidence at the trial reflected her undying prejudice against the colored race.

After much vacillation and to add insult to injury, the paltry sum of $600.00 was collected to give Bess as restitution for the wrong in which the capitalist courts played the leading role.

"Democracy" Falters

But no sooner had Bess been freed and the "respectable" one hundred percent bourgeois Anglo-Saxons of South Carolina were sending the decrepit old man their thrown-off rags and making an empty gesture by way of amend for the disgraceful abuse of racial oppression, than another phase of the drama was enacted.

The woman in the meantime improved in health, and went to the county sheriff, and with the persuasion of a section of the "noble" white Americans who could not permit Nordic "integrity" to be exposed before the world, encouraged the woman to retract her confession. The machinery

was soon put in motion, and the woman swore to another affidavit that she did not intend to say on the first occasion that Bess was innocent, but only that she wished to convey her "forgiveness" to Bess.

So after thirteen years imprisonment and a short parole, Bess was again arrested and thrown back into his dungeon where he faces a re-incarnation of seventeen more years. The shock, added to the present condition of the man's health, makes it certain that he will die in a felon's cell.

Today Ben Bess, formerly a respected and hard-working farmer, is behind the bars of a capitalist dungeon, awaiting the end of life.

This is capitalist "justice"! This is American "democracy"!

In this picture we get a true glimpse of what 12 millions of colored Americans are subjected to. This race, 95% of whom are workers and poor farmers, are the targets of capitalist exploitation in its most venal garb. Even organised labor under reformist leadership turns its back upon them leaving them to the mercy of the oppressors, and the misleaders of their own race who betray their interests to the master class.

There is hardly a day which does not bring with it some horrifying tale of race terrorism or class outrage.

EDITORIAL NOTE: We call the attention of the working class organisations the world over to the facts described in this article. These facts represent the conditions under which live and toil the Negroes in the "Free Land of Liberty." Lynching and terrorism, frame-up and railroading --- everything that will awe the hapless black toilers into submission is used to maintain the system of peonage and landlordism which is widely spread in the Southern part of the USA.

The Negro workers and peasants will be able to get real freedom and liberty only after the overthrow of the capitalist system by the International Revolutionary Working Class.

We call upon all Negro toilers to join the revolutionary labor movement and to fight desperately against capitalist oppresaion and exploitation and against the upholders of this system, the reformist, "Socialist" or Christian misleaders of the toiling masses.